



Integration of SDGs in

- Institutional governance/strategic level
- SDGs in research
- SDGs in campus operations
- SDGs in curriculum development
- SDGs in student engagement activities
- SDGs into community activities
- SDGs at a whole-institution level

Focus on

- Goal 1 - No poverty
- Goal 2 - Zero hunger
- Goal 3 - Good health and wellbeing
- Goal 4 - Quality education
- Goal 5 - Gender equality
- Goal 6 - Clean water and sanitation
- Goal 7 - Affordable and clean energy
- Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth
- Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities
- Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities
- Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production
- Goal 13 - Climate action
- Goal 14 - Life below water
- Goal 15 - Life on land
- Goal 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
- Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals

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Up for the Cup

In 2019, The University of Northampton joined forces with six other organisations across Northampton to form a collective coffee cup recycling campaign, led by the University. The project called “Up for the Cup” is funded by environmental charity Hubbub, made possible by the Starbucks Cup Fund and officially launched in January 2020 with a target to collect and recycle 160,000 paper cups within a 12-month period.

Prior to the pandemic it was calculated that approximately 8 million coffee cups were used in Northampton each year, with most not being recycled. The campaign aims to raise awareness that coffee cups need to be disposed of separate to other recyclable materials and therefore a key part of the project has been to educate students, staff and local community to make the right choices by not using disposable items or when necessary to do so they are correctly recycled.

Margaret Bates, visiting Professor of Sustainable Wastes Management at the University of Northampton, said: “Britons enjoy around 95 million cups of coffee per day. With a substantial number sipped from takeaway cups in coffee houses up and down the land, the challenge is on to recycle as many as possible.

“Up for the Cup brings together some of the town’s major employers – the University of Northampton, the Royal & Derngate Theatre, Grosvenor Shopping, local government offices, Northampton General Hospital and even the mainline railway station – to form a coalition tasked with tackling a pressing urban environmental issue”.

Each partner hosts specially selected and branded recycling bins across their site, students from the University’s Marketing and Wastes Management degrees provide support to partners and advise them in regard to promotional messaging for educating customers, staff and general public around responsible consumption and to conduct waste audits to enable the measurement of the effectiveness campaign.

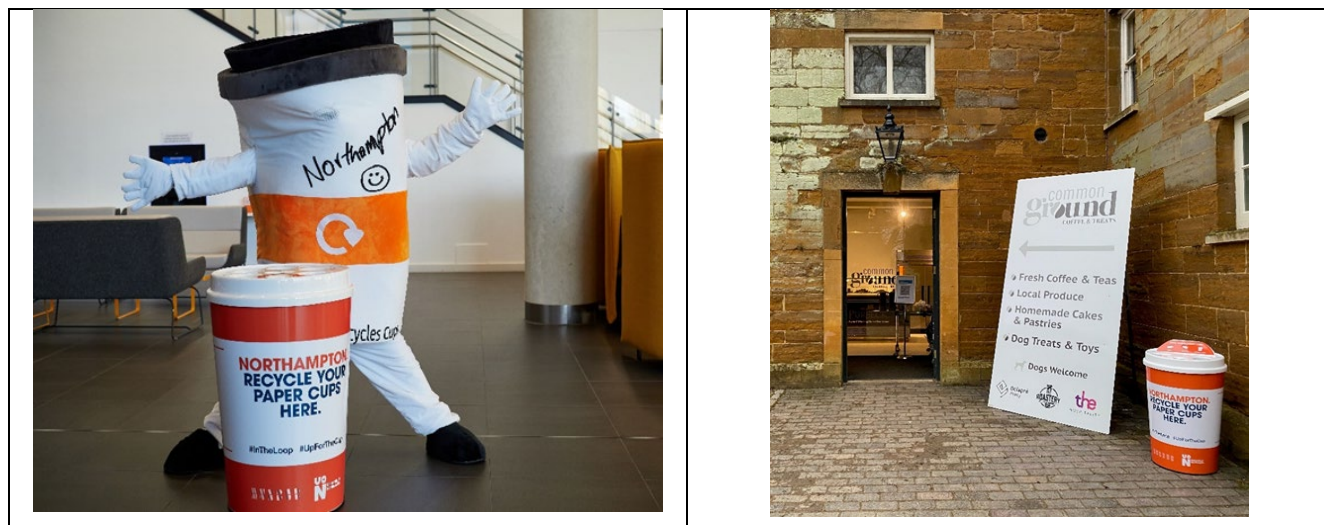
BENEFITS

1. Education of students, staff and our wider community in the myths surrounding the recycling of paper cups along with cardboard and paper collections to allow for approximately 60,0000 cups to be recycled across campus and the Town Centre.
2. Diversion of a waste stream equating to 1 tonne in weight from incineration for energy recovery to being recycled and made into new products, i.e. exercise books, re-useable coffee cups, plant pots etc.
3. Collaborative approach across our town centre partners to maximise communication and engagement opportunities supporting the collection of cups for recycling across large organisations across the town.

BARRIERS

1. Contamination – the cups should be free of liquid and the lid as well as other recyclable or non-recyclable waste. To help combat this, cup collection bins were sourced (as pictured) to provide sections for any remaining liquid, the lid and finally the cup, this helped reduce the contamination levels, however some cans and plastic bottles were still found mixed with the cups, these were removed by hand where safe to do so.

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CONCLUSIONS

This project has had a positive social impact for our town, at the start of 2020 prior to the launch of the campaign, many people had thought they were doing the right thing by placing their coffee cup for recycling along with paper or card. However, as the recycling of paper cups requires a specific process to separate the plastic lining from the paper outer it was imperative that a communication campaign was initiated to support the use of the cup recycling bins and maximise the volume of cups eligible for recycling.

To enable a smooth launch across all partners a project officer was employed from the outset of the project to enable the co-ordination of the set-up of the infrastructure, collections, reporting and the engagement campaign across all partners.

The success of the project has been impacted by lockdown restrictions of the past year with a number of our partners having to close or foot fall significantly reduced. However, approximately 60,000 cups been collected and recycled since launch, the focus has now turned to relaunching and expanding the project as restrictions ease and hope to collect the remainder of our target by the end of the year.

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